

## **I. Executive Summary**

The East Providence Health Equity Zone (EPHEZ) is deeply committed to maintaining an approach to community health and wellness that is rooted in collective impact, best practices, equity, and a collaborative governance model that integrates persons with lived experience in identifying barriers, creating solutions, and delivering services. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Rhode Island in March of 2020, the newly formed EPHEZ Steering Committee quickly came together to focus on addressing the immediate needs of the community. EPHEZ built a relationship with residents while distributing essential supplies, masks, sanitizer, resource packets, and testing information, and introduced themselves to local organizations by assisting with program and event promotion, connecting residents with their services, and relaying concerns and questions to the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH). However, this quick response to the pandemic so early in the development of EPHEZ meant delaying the creation and implementation of a formal governance structure and internal policies and procedures. As EPHEZ entered Year 3 in July 2021, the Steering Committee focused on developing these structures, while solidifying quick, thoughtful responses to community needs as an integral part of our approach to building health equity.

EPHEZ remains fortunate to have a diverse group of residents and professionals serving as the Steering Committee and has expanded the larger Collaborative to include more residents, faith-based leaders, community organizations, and statewide advocacy coalitions. Beyond retaining original members such as the East Providence Senior Center, the East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce, the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN), the Cape Verdean Progressive Center, Jules Hope Chest, and the Community Development Office of the City of East Providence, EPHEZ has developed and strengthened partnerships with the East Providence School System, Good Neighbors RI, the RI Elder Minority Taskforce, PACE-RI, and the University of Rhode Island's SNAP Education program. EPHEZ's approach to collaboration remains grounded in a recognition of the expertise of our partners and a commitment to uplifting and supporting existing programming. This approach, combined with our ability to provide staff support, community connections, and thoughtful feedback has led to a steady increase in interest in the EPHEZ from residents and organizations alike.

As we entered Year 3 the EPHEZ Steering Committee committed to creating a governance structure, empowering workgroups, and utilizing the increase in funding opportunities to increase staffing support for all EPHEZ programming. By the end of 2021, the EPHEZ Steering Committee, following months of revisions and input from the Steering Committee and workgroups, had ratified an official governance structure. This document details the roles and responsibilities of all workgroups and the Steering Committee, the overarching mission of EPHEZ, the roles and responsibilities of EPHEZ staff, voting and recusal procedures, membership guidelines, and the process for revision. All workgroups committed to carrying out programming, identifying opportunities for systems change, and expanding membership. All workgroups consistently meet every 1-2 months, discuss potential programming, collaborate with staff to ensure sufficient staffing, marketing, and funding, and share this information with residents. By the end of 2021 staffing levels had also increased, from one full-time and five part-time staff to 4 full-time and 3 part-time staff. These numbers continued to increase over the second half of the grant cycle, with three additional part-time staff added as of June 2022, and four additional full-time positions posted for Year 4. Of the three part-time positions added in 2022, two are administrative support

positions (Finance and Communications), who support the work of the East Providence, Warren, and Bristol Health Equity Zones. This sharing of resources is an example of another priority area over the last year, of partnering with the Bristol and Warren HEZs to ensure the efficient use of resources. Leaning on the support of EBCAP as the backbone organization for all three HEZs, we have partnered over the last year to not only share support resources, but to also begin developing a regional strategy to address overarching health equity barriers, including access to healthy, affordable food; services for families with young children; and substance use disorders. A highlight of this partnership was the development of a Healthy Food Access Report, in partnership with RIDOH's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) department and a graduate student from Tufts University. This report (see attachment "Healthy Food Access Report") utilized a mixture of geographic information mapping, in-depth survey responses from providers and residents, and an analysis of the food and transportation options within the area to identify the primary barriers to food access and suggestions on addressing these issues. This report has already been utilized by the Rhode Island Food Policy Council during a meeting with Senators Reed and Whitehouse and will be an integral part of our food systems work in Year 4.

Following the adoption of the Governance structure in December 2021, the EPHEZ Steering Committee was able to begin meeting on a monthly basis, after nearly two years of meeting on a weekly basis, and to integrate presentations from outside organizations into these monthly calls. This has allowed for more meaningful collaboration with other organizations, and an increased interest in joining the EPHEZ Collaborative from both local and statewide organizations. An exciting aspect of this is how frequently we are contacted by East Providence residents on behalf of their organization; we consistently hear that they are interested in supporting our work not only on a professional level, but on a personal level as a resident of the city. They are appreciative of the approach we have taken over the last three years, of remaining deeply committed to creating the right process for the work, rather than rushing forward during a time of great stress. This approach has been based in the understanding that the work of collective impact, community engagement, and equity and inclusion takes more time than standard collaboration, in order to ensure an impactful outcome.

In addition to the development of an infrastructure and deeper relationships with Collaborative members, over the past year EPHEZ has also leaned on the resources provided by EBCAP, and the natural strengths created by having a backbone organization with such a deep bench of programming and services. Through the work of the Rhode to Equity team, we have continued and deepened our relationship with the EBCAP Food Pantry, including identifying produce donation partners, EPHEZ Community Health Workers (CHWs) providing staff support and interacting with clients in the pantry, and expanding programming to include an increased focus on nutrition, budgeting, and food preservation. We continue to work with the EBCAP Community Health Team (CHT), meeting monthly to discuss community needs, training and professional development opportunities, and implementing needs assessments such as Cantril's Ladder into everyday resident interactions. Our Pre-School Development Grant (PDG) has partnered with Head Start and Early Head Start to offer trainings on Safe Sleep and the Rite-Smiles program; evidence-based Family Visiting programs in both our partnership with the RI Philharmonic Music School and new East Providence Play-and-Learn groups, and the WIC department to increase enrollment and general awareness. The East Bay Recovery Center continues to be a valuable partner, partnering to educate on substance use, provide resources and assistance with SNAP and Rent Relief RI applications to the residents of

the Rumford Motor Inn, and to schedule trainings on administering Narcan to East Providence school employees, from teachers to administrative support personnel.

The East Providence HEZ remains proud of the continued success of programming initiatives, including the work of the Rhode to Equity team on our Produce to People initiative; the early practice of family support goals through the implementation of Safe Sleep, Incredible Years, and Parents as Teachers curriculum; and a series of virtual town halls co-hosted with the East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva around resources available from faith-based leaders. The highlighted activities below are snapshots of our work throughout the year, and are a response to both the needs identified by residents during the initial 2019 Community Needs Assessment, and those identified by outreach staff and Collaborative members over the course of the year. They address the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) identified by the Rhode Island Department of Health, and have solidified EPHEZ's position in the community as a trusted resource and bridge between organizations and the communities they serve:

- **COVID-19 Emergency Response Services:** The EPHEZ Community Health Workers and Community Outreach Specialists were able to continue distributing masks, sanitizer, wipes, and resource packets to residents throughout the year. Following the provision of at-home test kits from RIDOH, EPHEZ distributed 2,142 kits to residents and community organizations. We partnered with several organizations throughout the year to provide targeted outreach, including regular attendance at the Good Neighbor's RI Food Pantry, the Weaver Library Farmer's Market, and the mobile food pantry and outreach at the Rumford Motor Inn, led by the East Bay Recovery Center and Gate of Hope. EPHEZ continued to provide street outreach, setting up outreach tables and assisting with SNAP applications at community locations, including supermarkets, laundromats, gas stations and convenience stores, in what has become a hallmark feature of EPHEZ's work-meeting residents where they are. This consistent visibility in the community has led to an increase in resident contact over the year-so much so that our newest outreach employee is an East Providence resident, who reached out to learn more about getting involved after speaking with our staff while running errands. We reached approximately 15,274 individuals through our COVID-19 response efforts over the last year, and they received a mixture of resource referral/connection, virus testing and vaccination support, masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and SDOH and basic needs assistance. Outreach staff completed the Community Health Worker training that was offered by the Community Health Worker Association of Rhode Island (CHWARI) in conjunction with RIDOH, with two staff receiving their certifications in March 2022, a third completing their classes in May 2022, and one of them currently enrolled in the CHW Supervisor training. Staff were trained in assisting with the completion of SNAP and Rent Relief RI applications, allowing for immediate, on-site assistance for residents. The relationship they were able to build with the East Providence Emergency Management Agency (EP EMA) over the last two years has led to partnerships in hosting vaccination events, addressing community concerns, and working together to create a food insecurity assessment. This will be implemented by EP EMA and will allow them to identify and connect residents at need with EPHEZ and EBCAP's Food Pantry.

- **Rhode to Equity:** EPHEZ served as the team lead for the East Providence Rhode to Equity (R2E) team, who continued the programmatic and systems work that began during the Diabetes Health Equity Challenge. This initiative promotes the integration of clinical and population health, centering people with lived experience to address health equity barriers and food insecurity for residents with diabetes or that are pre-diabetic. One of our Health Disparities CHWs transitioned to the full-time Rhode to Equity Coordinator role, bringing a background in both public health and kinesiology, and a connection to the URI SNAP Education program, local farms, and peer education programming. Continuing our support of the Produce to People program, we implemented a monthly mini-assessment, building a strong enough relationship with existing clients that they will serve as the initial members of next year's PLE Advisory Board. We also brought on an additional 12 clients, and with the support of a volunteer Registered Dietician Nutritionist (RDN) began integrating health education into the produce bags provided each month. We hosted a successful virtual cooking demonstration in November 2021, partnered with URI SNAP-Ed to offer the six-week "Eat Well, Spend Less" class, and once again partnered our volunteer RDN to offer free 1:1 sessions to all class attendees after every other class.
- **Pre-School Development:** EPHEZ has continued to connect families with young children and expectant parents to an array of integrated early childhood and parenting supports. A full-time Family Navigator began in September 2021, and immediately focused on learning about resources available, introducing herself to residents, and asking what they needed for support. This initial focus on learning about resources led to the creation of an easily adaptable database (<https://www.evernote.com/shard/s316/sh/141ec284-ece4-8df5-1232-8cb6f4bf73c3/87f658cabafd3aa9d5d2aafa87d9b9b0>), which is utilized internally and will be shared with Collaborative members in July 2022. This upcoming resource has been well-received by providers, municipal leaders, and residents alike, who view this as another example of EPHEZ working to provide community members with the resources they have requested. We continued to partner with the Rhode Island Philharmonic and Orchestra Music School and the EBCAP Family Visiting program, offering "Family Music Time with the Phil," which ran for 18 weeks and combined music education for toddlers, infants, and pre-k children with the Parents as Teachers evidence-based curriculum for parents. Twelve sessions of Incredible Years ran from February-April, with six families that participated in each session. Through a growing relationship with EBCAP's Head Start program, we collaborated during the monthly "Head Start Talks" sessions for parents to offer two separate workshops. The first was a culturally sensitive Safe Sleep program developed in partnership with RIDOH's Margo Katz during Year 2 of EPHEZ; followed by a session on Rite-Smiles and oral hygiene for children, which was presented in partnership with the Rite-Smiles program and United Health Plan (UHP).
- **Partnership with the East Providence School Department:** The East Providence Health Equity Zone continues to strengthen its relationship with the East Providence School Department, particularly with the Agnes B. Hennessey Elementary School. Identified as the highest need elementary school within the city, Hennessey is the initial school to engage with in creating new programs. Over the last

year, the East Providence School Department began participating in the “First Ten/Community Schools” initiative, which is grounded in the understanding of schools as community hubs. The School Department approached EPHEZ at the beginning of the school year, recognizing the impact we are having on the community, about collaborating to expand the resources available to families within schools. The EPHEZ Family Navigator became embedded within Hennessey, and is available to parents as a resource one day each week. She has been able to connect families with WIC, SNAP, LIHEAP, VOCA, and more. This relationship has continued to grow throughout the year, and this spring we were able to co-present two well-attended Play-and-Learn groups. As part of our focus this year on cross-grant programming, the Rhode to Equity team and our Family Navigator partnered to support the expansion of the Hennessey school garden, and to place hydroponic systems within ten classrooms. These hydroponic systems allow students to grow fresh produce in the classroom, which they are then able to take home to share with their families. As part of this initiative, students also received seed starter kits, to grow fresh produce at their own residence, supporting the importance of nutrition and eating fresh produce at a young age.

- EPHEZ Infrastructure Development:** The initial Community Needs Assessment showed that East Providence has many strengths, one of which is a strong, existing sense of community, followed closely by a strong emergency services system and a geographical proximity to many resource rich locations. EPHEZ has continued to build upon these strengths and to address community needs by supporting the growth of workgroups in the following areas: Behavioral Health; Housing and Homelessness; Senior Health and Wellness; Teen Focus, Resident Engagement, and Communications. While next year will see the planned expansion of new and existing workgroups, over the SFY22 grant cycle, a heavy emphasis was placed on empowering workgroup members to identify areas of need, potential partnerships, and programming opportunities. All of the workgroups identified above have identified their missions, goals for the year, and co-facilitators, and have provided a variety of community engagement and programming over the last year. They have begun developing a strategy to address systems change, as well as conversations with residents on how to continue improving resident engagement in and leadership of these workgroups. The Steering Committee drafted and finalized the Governance Structure for EPHEZ, in a collaborative and thoughtful process that encouraged feedback and participation. In June, the Steering Committee provided input in the annual performance evaluation of the EPHEZ Project Director, in alignment with the Governance Plan.

## II. Demographic Information of HEZ Community Served

HEZ Demographic Description	
<b>Geographic area served</b>	The East Providence HEZ serves Central East Providence, Rumford, and Riverside. (See census tracts area map on attachment titled “EP HEZ Resident Needs Assessment”). At the time of the attached assessment, East Providence (EP), the fifth largest city in RI, had the following demographics:

	<p>a population of 47,618 persons; socioeconomically, a median income lower than the state median and approximately 11% of residents living in extreme poverty (100% or below FPL); 31% in poverty (138% or below) and 60% under 400% of the federal poverty guidelines. The service area population is predominantly white (non-Hispanic) with a growing ethnically diverse populations emerging: Black, Hispanic Latinx, Asian, and individuals who identify as two-or more ethnicities. According to the most recent UDS Mapper data (a national database administered by Health Resources Services Administration), between the years of 2012-2016, approximately 13,317 persons with low income resided in the city. Data supported the following identified health concerns: over 8% had been told they had diabetes; approximately 30% had been told they had high blood pressure; over 12% adults who have delayed/not sought care due to cost; and nearly 11% had no regular source of care.</p>
<p><b>Description of racial/ethnic groups served in area and estimated population reached</b></p>	<p>The EP HEZ service area is comprised of the following racial and ethnic groups and the EP HEZ seeks to serve each of these groups with an equity and inclusion lens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>82.6% White</li> <li>6.4% Black</li> <li>6.2% Hispanic</li> <li>5.2% Two or More Races</li> <li>5% Other</li> <li>2.9% Asian</li> </ul> <p>The estimated population reached during the last year through various COVID-19 support efforts including education (including through social media outreach and partnership with the City of East Providence), mask distribution, vaccine delivery and support, and testing delivery and support was approximately 10,742. The number supported with direct services through the pandemic via COVID-19 outreach to address a broad range of needs (food, housing, SDOH supports, etc.), as well as through Rhode to Equity, Safe Sleep, Parents as Teachers, Incredible Years Curriculum, and additional PDG programming was approximately 16,043. Through our work under the Health Disparities grant providing outreach and support to COVID-19 testing sites in the community, including the site staffed by the EBCAP Health Center, we reached an additional 30,945 individuals. Our social media reach also increased, as we reached an estimated 64,280 individuals via digital communication, including social media and email.</p>

<p><b>Key areas of RI Statewide SDOH</b></p>	<p>The Community Needs Assessment (see attached EP HEZ Community Needs Assessment), along with RIDOH identified SDOH needs have determined the focus of the Steering Committee and Work Groups to date. This is a dynamic process as the EP HEZ is committed to a true collective impact approach that continuously incorporates a focus on equity and the voices of those with lived experience. The Steering Committee is strong, and the currently active Work Groups include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident Engagement</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Behavioral Health</li> <li>• Teen Focus</li> <li>• Senior Services</li> <li>• Housing and Homelessness</li> <li>• Governance</li> </ul> <p>When addressing RI Health Equity Measures, much of our work is accomplished through our partnerships within the community, and working together to create short- and long-term impacts, whether from limited time programming, such as the PAT/RI Philharmonic School music class, or behind the scenes changes, such as the implementation of Cantril's Ladder by the CHT and Food Pantry during initial assessments. Internally, we also recognize the work we can do to address these measures; for example, staff participation in the EBCAP Justice and Equity Taskforce, which provided training on bystander intervention. Even for the areas that are not a specific focus for EP HEZ at the moment, we try to stay involved and informed, and prepared to move forward with partnerships and services should that focus change-an example is general community trauma, and our participation in the Ocean State Trauma Informed Care Coalition (OSTICC).</p> <p>Specific Statewide SDOH and RIDOH Health Equity Measures addressed this year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthcare Access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Partnership with RIDOH Dental Program, EBCAP Dental Clinic, and Rite-Smiles</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collaborating with RIDOH to create an assessment on oral health and access to oral health professionals in EP</li> <li>○ Utilizing the strength of having EBCAP as a backbone-connection to EBCAP Health has allowed for increased outreach and connection to the community around COVID-19 testing and vaccination</li> <li>• Social Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EP HEZ outreach staff trained in completing SNAP and Rent Relief RI applications</li> <li>○ Outreach Specialists stationed in the EP Food Pantry 1x/week, and trained on completing Food Pantry needs assessment(s)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Behavioral Health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collaborate with East Providence Prevention Coalition (EPPC), East Bay Recovery Center, EBCAP Behavioral Health, Bradley Hospital, and Family Care Community Partnership (FCCP)</li> <li>○ BH Workgroup focused on interactive programming</li> <li>○ Senior Workgroup-focus on hoarding and social isolation; identified priority area for Year 4 of grief counseling and peer support</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Social Vulnerability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conscious of social vulnerability in program intake/assessments</li> <li>○ Implementation of Cantril's Ladder by EPHEZ, Food Pantry and Community Health Team (CHT)</li> <li>○ Staff Development: Scheduled trainings for next year on Mental Health First Aid and Motivational Interviewing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Equity in Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing and Homelessness workgroup is heavily focused on impacting policy; subcommittees for education, identifying development opportunities, and identifying regulations that should be changed</li> <li>○ Participation in EP Comprehensive Planning Workshops, on RI Hunger Elimination Taskforce; participant in RIDOH Physical Activity and Nutrition Workgroups</li> <li>○ Relationship with elected officials: participation and support from Representative Liana Cassar and Senator</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	--



	<p>Valerie Lawson; co-hosted several events with East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Insecurity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rhode to Equity (R2E) Grant: provides fresh produce 1x/month to 29 East Providence residents with diabetes experiencing food insecurity</li> <li>○ Volunteer RDN provides education-information and recipes in each bag, virtual cooking demo in November, and 1:1 consultation in the Spring</li> <li>○ Education-how can we make changes that will continue after this program-partnership with URI Snap-Ed, Age Friendly RI, East Providence Senior Center, and others</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	--

### III. Partner Summary

Collaborative membership list attached.

### IV. Major Accomplishments

#### Health Disparities:

Over the last year, an integral component of EPHEZ's COVID-19 outreach efforts has been the continued building of community relationships and trust and building them in a manner that allows us to meet people where they are, both physically and emotionally. EPHEZ's outreach team is well-known in the community, and we frequently receive requests from local organizations to provide a resource table at an event or to co-host a program. We have coordinated a variety of direct services over the last year, including:

- 17,687 people received masks
- 2,142 people received at-home test kits
- 735 assisted in setting up testing or vaccination appointments
- 589 Social Determinant of Health (SDOH) screenings provided

We also conducted three community-wide report out events, marketed as "Identifying Resident Priorities" which had over 600 attendees. In response to community members' frustration that they are often asked for their input and stories without receiving anything in kind, these events were combined with a resource fair, vaccination clinic, and on-site appointments for Rent Relief RI and SNAP. Residents provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about these events-they appreciated the opportunity to share their thoughts, and loved the opportunity to

connect with resources, receive their vaccination/booster, and receive assistance with applications. The initial results of these events are attached (HEZ Community Event Data, Google Sheet), and a final report on the feedback received and suggestions for future actions will be available to all later this calendar year. Finally, as an example of our outreach team's ability to engage with residents, our most recent hire is a direct result of our street outreach efforts-a resident met our team several times during outreach, loved the work being done, and contacted us to learn more about getting involved. Three months later, she is a valuable member of our team, and a perfect example of how Health Equity Zones can engage with and uplift residents.

### **Rhode to Equity**

The East Providence Rhode to Equity team, led by EPHEZ, successfully participated in Year 1 of Rhode to Equity (R2E), an innovative approach to creating systems change that is funded by the Rhode Island Health Systems Transformation Fund. Rhode to Equity combines the resources of HEZs, community partners, accountable entities, and persons with lived experience to address barriers to health equity in individual communities. The East Providence team, which includes members of EBCAP's Community Health Team, Nursing staff, and Food Pantry, as well as staff from Integrated Healthcare Partners (IHP), and a resident with lived experience, continues to focus on addressing food insecurity among East Providence residents, and particularly those with diabetes. We continued and expanded the Produce to People pilot program from the Diabetes Health Equity Challenge, serving nearly 30 individuals by the end of the reporting year. The program also continued to grow in the scope of services provided, integrating the feedback and services of a Registered Dietetic Nutritionist (RDN), partnering with the SNAP-Ed program at the University of Rhode Island, and identifying local farms for produce donations. Other program accomplishments include:

- Produce to People: Continued to provide bags of fresh produce, lean proteins, recipes, nutrition information, and cooking utensils to 29 East Providence residents each month. Our R2E Coordinator speaks with residents at least once a month, conducting ongoing needs assessments, gathering feedback about the items provided and their impact on clients' daily lives, and connecting them with continuing education. Enrollment in the program follows an initial needs and risk assessment, with ineligible residents connected with other community resources, the EBCAP Community Health Team, the Food Pantry, and EPHEZ staff. Current participants will also form the foundation of the Persons with Lived Experience (PLE) Advisory Board during Year 4, with interested participants already meeting with team members and planning upcoming meetings and trainings.
- Following feedback from our PLE around the lack of education opportunities, we partnered with the URI SNAP-Ed office to offer the "Eat Well, Spend Less" program from April-May. This six-week program includes healthy recipe demonstrations and samples, budgeting and meal planning tips, and small cooking or meal planning tools. Thanks to our volunteer RDN, we were also able to offer free, 1:1 sessions for all participants after three of these classes, assisting them in integrating lessons learned into their daily lives. Classes were held at the Crescent Park Manor Community Room, an affordable housing location in Riverside.
- We built several new relationships this year, including with the already referenced RDN, who in addition to the services listed above, also provided a free virtual cooking demonstration in the fall, with the recipe sent out ahead of time to all attendees, and the

ingredients provided to all members of the Produce to People program. We also connected with Means Database, who provided free, pre-made, diabetic-friendly meals to Produce to People clients in the fall, and who we are working with to offer these meals to a wider range of residents. Frontier Farms, a small farm in Rhode Island, will begin donating produce on a bi-weekly basis at the beginning of July, expanding the offerings available at the EBCAP Food Pantry.

- Building on the strong relationship established with the East Providence Fire Department during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are creating a food insecurity screening tool to be utilized by all East Providence firefighters, creating a new path to connect residents to services.
- Persons with Lived Experience Advisory Board: Recognizing the value of resident voices, and particularly those with lived experience, the EPHEZ R2E team has begun the process of creating a PLE Advisory Board, which will be comprised of residents with chronic illnesses that are also experiencing or have experienced food insecurity. In addition to providing regular input as to programming efforts, the PLE Advisory Board will also receive training and coaching in self-advocacy, creating a sustainable, resident-led advisory board. As EPHEZ begins to turn our focus from programming to systemic change in Year 4, the advocacy efforts of these residents will be invaluable.
- Additional highlights include: partnered with Stop and Shop, EBCAP's WIC office and Food Pantry, and Good Neighbors RI to provide free baby food and formula to families before the holidays; distributed supermarket gift cards to families in need during the holidays; approached by Age Friendly RI to participate in their Silver Aprons program, offering cooking classes to seniors throughout the city starting in August 2022.

### **Partnership with the City of East Providence**

The East Providence HEZ has continued to expand its ability to impact policy and systems change through a strong partnership with the City of East Providence. EPHEZ and the East Providence Mayor's Office have co-hosted several successful events, including two virtual town halls for faith based leaders, the series of combined vaccination clinics and community report outs referenced above, and a city-wide effort to distribute at-home COVID-19 test kits. Recognizing the impact of substance use, we continue to strengthen our relationship with the East Providence Prevention Coalition (EPPC), supporting a summertime health fair, creating a "Coffee and Connections" series to facilitate resident connection and peer support, and hosting a successful screening and community conversation around the Department of Justice produced documentary "Circles and Silence," which address substance use.

### **Pre-School Development Grant:**

Over the last year, we have continued to focus on providing resources, support, and education to families with children ages 0-5 and expectant parents, particularly those from traditionally underserved communities. As detailed in the Executive Summary above, our Family Navigator has spent the last year establishing herself as a trusted resource within the community, through a regular presence at Hennessey Elementary School, programming initiatives such as dance classes for toddlers at Weaver Library, and setting up kid-friendly activity tables at vaccination clinics and resource fairs. Her work and relationship with residents cannot be overstated. She has had such a positive impact on the families at Hennessey

that the East Providence School Department has approached us about placing Family Navigators or their equivalent at other elementary schools throughout the city, with a plan already in place to expand to Whiteknact Elementary School at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year. In an example of how evolving relationships can begin to create change outside of the initial scope of work, the work done at Hennessey allowed us to begin conversations with the incoming Superintendent to provide trainings on NARCAN administration to school personnel. These conversations among EPHEZ, the East Providence School Department, and the East Bay Recovery Center led to an agreement to provide training to school personnel during school-sanctioned Professional Development days at the beginning of the upcoming school year, and have opened the door to further conversations around substance use and behavioral health needs, for staff, students, and families. In addition to the work with the school department, additional highlights include:

- Continued partnership with the Rhode Island Philharmonic and Orchestra Music School and EBCAP's Parents as Teachers (PAT) program; for the second year in a row, "Family Music Time with the Phil," a free, 18-week program that combines music education for infants, toddlers, and pre-k students with the evidence-based PAT curriculum for parents, was offered to families across the city. The program was once again virtual due to COVID-19, but was still able to retain the majority of families enrolled throughout the program. Families receive free books and musical instruments to continue their education at home, and are able to make a connection with both the EBCAP Family Visiting team and the EPHEZ Family Navigator. Families have already contacted us about next year's programming, and we plan to continue our relationship with the Philharmonic Music School as we head into Year 4.
- For the second year in a row, we offered the evidence-based Incredible Years program, a 12-week series of classes that helps to treat and prevent behavioral health challenges among children, and to promote social, emotional, and academic competence.
- Created Play-and-Learn kits to distribute; each kit contained seeds, potting soil, a small pot, and kid-friendly info around growing vegetables and healthy eating. These have been very well-received by parents and children alike, and along with other kid-friendly activities that were provided throughout the year, have led to EPHEZ being approached by organizations throughout East Providence to host family-activity tables at community events throughout the remainder of the calendar year.

### **Governance Development and Supported Growth**

A priority for EPHEZ during Year 3 was the creation of a governance structure. The attached document (East Providence Health Equity Governance Structure, Nov. 2021) is a result of six months of revisions, feedback from the Steering Committee and workgroup members, and the work of our resident-led Governance Workgroup.

**Resident Engagement Advisory Workgroup:** The Resident Engagement Advisory Workgroup continued to meet on a monthly basis, structuring their meeting days and time around the requests of resident members. They planned and co-hosted two successful town halls for faith-based leaders in East Providence, as an opportunity for them to share resources, the concerns of their congregations, and suggestions for removing health equity barriers. A third town hall is being scheduled for Year 4, and participants are working to create a city-wide email thread for all faith-based leaders, allowing for the immediate sharing of information.

**Housing and Homelessness Workgroup:** This workgroup meets every other month, with three smaller subcommittees meeting on the off months. Co-facilitated by the Policy Director of Housing Works RI and the East Providence Director of Community Development, they are strategizing methods of increasing the affordable housing stock in East Providence, as well as working to remove the stigma of affordable and subsidized housing among residents. With the support of a grant from United Way RI, Housing Works RI chose East Providence as a city to conduct housing workshops and focus groups, in an effort to assess the community level of knowledge around housing barriers, resources, and regulations. This information will be used to recommend systemic and policy changes to legislators and be shared with community members. The Housing and Homelessness Workgroup participated in the spring Community Event series, gathering information and feedback from residents, which will inform the questions, locations, and overall tone of the upcoming workshops and focus groups.

**Behavioral Health Workgroup:** The Behavioral Health Workgroup has grown significantly over the last year, increasing membership to include Bradley Children's Hospital, the East Providence Prevention Coalition, the East Bay Recovery Center, school personnel, and residents. They successfully co-hosted the previously mentioned "Circles and Silence" film screening and discussion, and identified trauma-informed care as a priority for the upcoming year.

**Teen Focus Workgroup:** Identified as a priority population during our initial Community Needs Assessment, increasing engagement with East Providence teens, and creating meaningful opportunities for leadership and to provide feedback was the top goal of the Teen Focus Workgroup during Year 3. They hosted two teen meet-and-greet sessions during the summer, which were led by two EPHEZ teen interns; high school students that were connected with EPHEZ via our relationship with the EBCAP Youth Center. These sessions identified the following priorities for teens: recreation opportunities, community events, and a focus on mental health, substance use, and bullying. EPHEZ hosted an additional intern during the school year, who provided feedback on the work of the Housing and Homelessness Workgroup, and thoughts on increasing youth engagement in housing advocacy. The Teen Focus Workgroup also helped EPHEZ to strengthen its partnership with the East Providence Prevention Coalition, which holds a significant amount of health-focused programming and recreational opportunities for teens, including the above mentioned "Circles and Silence" screening. The co-facilitators of the Teen Focus Workgroup have committed to participating in the RIDOH Youth Engagement Community of Practice in Year 4.

**Senior Health and Wellness Workgroup:** Led by EBCAP's Senior Director of Healthy Aging, the Senior Health and Wellness Group hosted a well-attended workshop on Senior Hoarding and Mitigation; co-hosted meetings with the RI Elder Minority Taskforce; collaborated with the East Providence Senior Center to place teen interns within the Senior Center, increasing inter-generational interactions within the community; and supported the first of our "Identifying Resident Priorities" community events at the Senior Center, which was attended by nearly 200 seniors.

**Regional Strategy to Address Health Equity Barriers:** Recognizing a common theme in regional health disparities, EPHEZ partnered with the Bristol and Warren HEZs to ensure the efficient use of resources and sharing of information. Leaning on the support of EBCAP as the backbone organization for all three HEZs, we have partnered over the last year to not only share support resources, but to also begin developing a regional strategy to address overarching health equity barriers, including access to healthy, affordable food; services for families with young children; and

substance use disorders. A highlight of this partnership was the development of a Food Access Report, in partnership with RIDOH's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) department and a graduate student from Tufts University. This report (see attachment Healthy Food Access Report) utilized a mixture of geographic information mapping, in-depth survey responses from providers and residents, and an analysis of the food and transportation options within the area to identify the primary barriers to food access and suggestions on addressing these issues. This report has already been utilized by the Rhode Island Food Policy Council during a meeting with Senators Reed and Whitehouse and will be an integral part of our food systems work in Year 4.

**Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** EPHEZ Collaborative members, including all EPHEZ staff, are deeply committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and to supporting anti-racist policies, both within the community and within EBCAP. All staff are members of EBCAP's staff-led Taskforce for Justice and Equity (TFJE), and have participated in trainings around anti-racist leadership and meeting facilitation, creating policy change, and recognizing implicit and explicit bias. Staff have participated in open forums around LGBTQ+ experiences and a special forum around lived experience and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and the EPHEZ Project Director co-led an open forum on disability rights. Two Collaborative members and the EPHEZ Project Director are also participating in the Results Based Accountability Anti-Racist Foundational Series offered by RIDOH and facilitated by Equity and Results; this is a year-long series aimed at creating anti-racist systems change within our communities.

## **V. Success Stories/Narrative**

### **Perspective from the EPHEZ Steering Committee:**

*"The East Providence Health Equity Zone has been actively providing resources and needed supplies to our residents throughout this pandemic. Our HEZ has been instrumental in identifying different insecurities our residents are struggling with and has helped tackle the barriers that many residents are facing. The EPHEZ is an asset to our community and its only just begun tackling the hard issues."*

*"I am proud to be an active and involved member of the EPHEZ Steering Committee. Our group remains dedicated and committed to identifying insecurities and also providing opportunities to the East Providence Community. The work our HEZ is doing on a day to day basis is instrumental to the growth and equity of our community."*

### **Perspective from Residents about Rhode to Equity:**

*"This year has shown that the more you listen, the more we (residents) will give. If you give us a voice, you will hear us, and the more open you are, the more we will give you."*

*"This team is important because it allows PLEs to contribute. My ideas are listened to, and I receive feedback from others. These conversations are so important! [I] do not want to see this end anytime soon-this program needs to be built on. Hearing all of the emotions behind everyone's feedback-that is so important, and shared with the community."*

In addition to our resident voices, we also heard from our Accountable Entity, Integrated Healthcare Partners (IHP), about the Rhode to Equity program:

*"You should know that this team has been mission-driven and committed to bettering the East Providence community from the start, and that workers from different organizations and PLEs became one unit to work towards our goals."*

When creating and running a program like Produce to People, there is always a question of impact-what are we doing besides helping people to eat a little healthier one week/month? Based on feedback from residents, we began including multiple recipes each month, information on how to store produce, make healthy snacks, and better understand nutrition information. We also provided kitchen tools-spiralizers, produce savers, mini-blenders, and more. The result? Participants have said they have expanded the types of produce they will eat, are excited to cook new things each month, and want to know how they can do and learn more.

#### **Incredible Years Takeaways:**

*"Thank you for everything!! I already feel the effects from this program."*

*"What a pleasure to have attended this session of classes. Who knows I may be back... can I come back ? Just kidding, but seriously if I wanted to? I can't express the appreciation I have for all your work and time you put in after hrs. Truly a breath of fresh air, that such a program is available and being provided with the small heart of RI. Once again thank you, will make sure I reach out even if it's regarding schooling in the area or looking for other cool resources."*

#### **Pre-School Development Programming: "Why Are Baby Teeth Important?":**

*EPHEZ, EBCAP's Head Start, and United Healthcare partnered to present "Head Start Talks: Why Are Baby Teeth Important," a discussion on how to keep children's teeth healthy and their smiles happy in February 2022 via Zoom. Families that attended previous Head Start talks were polled on their interest in this topic, and 10 individuals were able to participate in this virtual conversation. We raffled off two water-flossers to participants, and through the generosity of the Rite-Smiles program at United Healthcare, every family at each EBCAP Head Start location received a free dental kit.*

### **Building Resilient Communities: Cross-Grant Programming:**

*As we look to Year 4, EPHEZ is focusing on the intersection between different barriers to health equity-one of which is access to healthy food. Recognizing that healthy eating habits start young, our Family Navigator has created an interactive activity-children choose and decorate their vegetable pot, fill it with soil and the vegetable seed of their choice, and receive a book on eating fruits and vegetables. For parents? We can connect them with WIC, assist with SNAP applications, and provide educational programing. These kits have been a huge hit with kids and parents alike!*

### **Final Thoughts from a Resident:**

*"Thank you for everything that you do to get us connected!"*

### **VI. EPHEZ Dashboard/Action Plan**

Action/Activity	Objective	Impact Area	Process Measure	Outcome Measure	Data Source/Frequency of Data Collection	Funding
<b>Goal 1: Build Awareness</b>						
Continue supporting the Resident Engagement and Communications Workgroups	Increase awareness of social, medical, educational, and financial resources available to East Providence residents. Increase community engagement and continue to establish EPHEZ as a trusted community resource.	Community Engagement	Attend monthly workgroup meetings  Increase membership by 5 residents over the course of the year	<b>Resident Engagement Workgroup:</b> Continued growth of workgroup membership and programming opportunities  <b>Communications Workgroup:</b> Continued growth of workgroup membership and increased impact of communications materials	Data Collection Frequency: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: Membership List	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II Component C CHW Grant



Activity 1.1: Attend and support community events. List of events attended attached, see document _____		Community Engagement	Participate in at least one community event/month	Steady increase in the amount of organizations contacting EPHEZ as a way to connect with residents  Increased assistance requests/resource referrals from residents	Data Collection Frequency: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: CODECT Database (staff reports)	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II Component C CHW Grant
Activity 1.2 Co-host two faith-based leaders town halls with the East Providence Mayor's Office		Community Engagement	43 attendees	Forming of Interfaith Leaders Coalition	Data Collection: Annually  Data Source: Attendance List Email Listserv	Core Health Disparities
<b>Goal 2: Promote Resiliency</b>						
Partner with Housing Works RI to improve resident knowledge of housing resources and regulations; host focus groups to determine gaps in knowledge and identify disparities	Assess community knowledge of housing supports and barriers; utilize information gathered to effect policy and regulatory change	Community Engagement  Housing Access	Co-host focus groups	Increase resident knowledge of housing resources and regulations  Influence resident views of affordable housing and government-funded housing subsidies	Data Collection: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: Attendance List Pre- and Post-Surveys Resident testimony in support of/against East Providence housing regulations, laws, and developments	Core Grant Health Disparities

Activity 2.1: Support the EPHEZ Housing and Homelessness Workgroup		Community Engagement  Housing Security	Attend bi-monthly meetings of the Housing and Homelessness Workgroup; attend monthly subcommittee meetings on the topics of education, planning/development, and regulations	Increase resident knowledge of housing resources and regulations  Influence resident views of affordable housing and government-funded housing subsidies  Passing of Workgroup supported housing developments and/or legislation	Data Collection: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: Attendance List Pre- and Post-Surveys Legislation Tracking	Core Health Disparities
Activity 2.2 Expand membership of the Housing and Homelessness Workgroup		Community Engagement Housing Access	Identify and invite at least 10 new members to attend meetings; have at least 2 regularly attending new members by June 2022	Increased advocacy efforts of the Workgroup, including testifying in support of or against legislation; identifying additional funding sources, and participation in City-funded planning efforts	Data Collection: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: Attendance List Legislation Tracking Funding Opportunities Identified	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant
Activity 2.3 Attended and participated in the Comprehensive Planning Housing Workgroup		Community Engagement Civic Engagement Housing Access	Staff Participation: 4 EPHEZ staff participated in the Comprehensive	Inclusion of Housing and Homelessness Workgroup goals	Data Collection: Annually  Data Source: Attendance List	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant

			Planning Housing Workgroup	in the East Providence Comprehensive Housing Plan	East Providence Comprehensive Plan (In Progress)	
Distribute and update a comprehensive, virtual resource hub	Continue to develop and share a comprehensive resource hub to support residents in self-sufficiency	Community Engagement  Access to Resources	Creation of Evernote Database  Amount of users  Frequency of use	Increased resource utilization among East Providence residents	Data Collection: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: User List CODECT Database (staff reporting, including successful referrals)	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development  Grant, Component I and II Component C CHW Grant
Activity 3.1: Utilize the Evernote application and website to create an internal database of resources		Resource Referral	Successful creation of Evernote database(s) for priority areas	Increased resource utilization among East Providence residents	Data Collection: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: User List CODECT Database (staff reporting, including successful referrals)	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II Component C CHW Grant

Activity 3.2: Utilize the Evernote application and website to create a database of resources and outreach materials to be shared with the EPHEZ Collaborative		Community Engagement Resource Referral Collaborative Building	Successful creation of Evernote database(s) for outreach materials and resources	Utilization of Evernote Database by EPHEZ Collaborative members and larger community  Increased connection of residents to resources	Data Collection: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: User Records EPHEZ data tracking-successful referrals (CODECT database)	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II  Component C CHW Grant
Activity 3.3: Share regular EPHEZ programming and administrative updates with the EPHEZ Collaborative		Community Engagement Collaborative Building	Updates shared with EPHEZ Collaborative members: 15  Additional Resources/Events shared with EPHEZ Collaborative members: 47  Presentations provided to EPHEZ Collaborative members: 4	Increased engagement of EPHEZ Collaborative members  Increased recognition of EPHEZ within the community	Data Collection: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: Email Records Attendance List	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II  Component C CHW Grant  Rhode to Equity: \$77,900
Continue to convene and support a Faith Leaders Resiliency Collaborative	Support Faith Leaders in assisting with community emergency response efforts; integrate their work with broader community resiliency efforts	Community Engagement	Host at least two faith-based leaders town halls	Independent meeting(s) of faith-based leaders  Interfaith programming	Data Collection: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: Attendance list Pre- and post-surveys	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II

				<p>Increased resource utilization by East Providence residents</p> <p>Increased referrals to social/medical/behavioral health services by faith-based leaders</p>	<p>EPHEZ data tracking</p> <p>Voluntary data tracking from Faith Leaders Resiliency Collaborative</p>	Component C CHW Grant
Activity 4.1: Partnered with the East Providence Mayor's Office to co-host two virtual faith-based leaders town halls, providing an opportunity to share resources and support with each other and the community		Community Engagement Collaborative Building	43 total attendees	Creation and utilization of Evernote database	<p>Data Collection: Annually</p> <p>Data Source: Attendance list</p>	<p>Core Grant</p> <p>Health Disparities Grant</p> <p>Pre-School Development Grant,</p> <p>Component I and II</p> <p>Component C CHW Grant</p>
Support the creation of a Persons with Lived Experience (PLE) Advisory Board	<p>Improve access to healthy food and ensure systems/policy change is beneficial to the impacted community; support a self-advocating community and emerging leaders</p>	Community Engagement	<p>Maintain at least three regular members</p> <p>Offer at least three educational opportunities</p> <p>Support in at least one self-advocacy effort</p>	Support of self-advocating community	<p>Data Collection: Monthly, Annually</p> <p>Data Source: Attendance list(s) 3, 6, 9, 12-month impact and satisfaction surveys</p>	<p>Rhode to Equity Grant: \$77,900</p> <p>Component C CHW Grant</p>

Activity 5.1: Provide staff and administrative support to the Produce to People program		Community Engagement Collaborative Building Food Access	(1) Maintained monthly enrollment of at least 15 individuals; (2) increased enrollment to 30 individuals by June 2022; (3) maintained monthly phone calls with participants to assess satisfaction, gather feedback, and identify case management needs	Creation of PLE Advisory Board	<p>Data Collection: Monthly, Annually</p> <p>Data Source: CODECT Family Development SDOH Needs Assessment Participant List Written/Verbal feedback from participants</p>	Rhode to Equity Grant: \$77,900 Component C CHW Grant
Activity 5.2: Hired a full-time Rhode to Equity Coordinator to support program growth and resident engagement		Community Engagement Collaborative Building Food Access	<p>Monthly contact with PLE clients</p> <p>8 program opportunities provided</p> <p>7 new partnerships created</p>	Increased resident engagement and impact on lifestyle (more likely to purchase produce, read nutrition labels, etc.)	<p>Data Collection: Monthly, Annually</p> <p>Data Source: CODECT Database (staff reporting, monthly assessments)</p>	Rhode to Equity Grant: \$77,900 Component C CHW Grant

Activity 5.3 With PLE input, identify and offer educational opportunities for East Providence residents related to (1) healthy eating; (2) general nutrition; (3) SNAP education; (4) food preparation/preservation		Community Engagement Collaborative Building Community Resilience Food Access	Provided 2 interactive educational opportunities (Cooking demonstration November 2021; “Eat Well, Spend Less” class April-May 2022); provided recipes and nutrition information monthly; see attached documents for examples	Improved health outcomes for East Providence residents experiencing food insecurity	Data Collection: Weekly (during programming) Monthly Annually  Data Source: Attendance list Pre- and post-surveys IHP database (Accountable Entity patients only)	Rhode to Equity Grant: \$77,900 Component C CHW Grant
Activity 5.4: Identify and connect with community partners to support and expand the produce offered to Produce to People participants		Community Engagement Collaborative Building Community Resilience Food Access	Developed partnerships with the following organizations: Means Database, Frontier Farms, Hope’s Harvest	Increased access to healthy food and/or fresh produce for East Providence residents	Data Collection: Quarterly, Annually  Data Source: Collaborative membership list (see attached)	Rhode to Equity Grant: \$77,900 Component C CHW Grant
A range of outreach activities in partnership with state and local leaders to increase vaccination and testing rates, provide system navigation supports, and foster community resilience	Continue to expand community level response to the COVID-19 pandemic to support community resilience and recovery	Community Engagement Community Resilience	283 outreach events attended during Year 3, reaching 15,274 residents	Increased vaccination rates Increased testing rates Decreased COVID-19 positivity rate	Data Collection: Bi-Weekly, Monthly, Annually  Data Source: RIDOH Bi-Weekly COVID Reporting Form	Health Disparities Grant

					EBCAP Health Vaccination/Testing Rates RIDOH Monthly Vaccination/Testing /Positivity Rates Reporting	
Activity 6.1: Continue street outreach efforts		Community Engagement	Provide at least one street outreach effort/week; locations attended attached	Increased community presence, leading to expanded EPHEZ Collaborative membership	EPHEZ Collaborative Membership List (see attached)	Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II Rhode to Equity Grant: \$77,900 Component C CHW Grant
Activity 6.2: Identify and participate in community outreach efforts related to COVID-19 mitigation; participate in monthly calls with RIDOH and East Providence EMS around COVID-19 mitigation		Community Resilience	Attend monthly RIDOH meetings; participate in vaccination clinics throughout East Providence	Increased vaccination rates Increased testing rates Decreased COVID-19 positivity rate	Data Collection: Bi-Weekly, Monthly, Annually  Data Source: RIDOH Bi-Weekly COVID Reporting Form  EBCAP Health Vaccination/Testing Rates RIDOH Monthly Vaccination/Testing /Positivity Rates Reporting	Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II



Activity 6.3: Survey residents about needs/barriers related to COVID-19		Community Engagement	See attached survey responses	<p>Provide targeted COVID-19 outreach, focus on vaccination, testing, and resource referral</p> <p>Increased vaccination rates Increased testing rates Decreased COVID-19 positivity rate</p>	<p>Data Collection: Bi-Weekly, Monthly, Annually</p> <p>Data Source: RIDOH Bi-Weekly COVID Reporting Form EBCAP Health Vaccination/Testing Rates RIDOH Monthly Vaccination/Testing /Positivity Rates Reporting</p>	Health Disparities Grant
Activity 6.4: Identify community organizations and municipal departments to partner with to provide in-person outreach and COVID-19 resources		Community Engagement Community Resilience Collaborative Building	Partnered with 30+ organizations and departments to co-host/attend 283 outreach and/or programming opportunities	<p>Provide targeted COVID-19 outreach, focus on vaccination, testing, and resource referral</p> <p>Increased vaccination rates Increased testing rates Decreased COVID-19 positivity rate</p>	<p>Data Collection: Bi-Weekly, Monthly, Annually</p> <p>Data Source: RIDOH Bi-Weekly COVID Reporting Form EBCAP Health Vaccination/Testing Rates RIDOH Monthly Vaccination/Testing /Positivity Rates Reporting EPHEZ Collaborative Membership List (see attached).</p>	Health Disparities Grant

Goal 3: Improve Access to Health Services						
Continue to support the Behavioral Health Workgroup	Utilize community feedback from Year 3 around existing gaps in the behavioral healthcare system to continue addressing priority action items; collaborate with EPHEZ workgroups and EPHEZ Collaborative members to continue the development and maintenance of a community resource hub	Community Engagement Community Resilience Behavioral Health	Attend monthly Workgroup meetings	Increased amount of successful referrals  Decrease in negative community perceptions around behavioral health access	Data Collection: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: Attendance list	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II Component C CHW Grant
Activity 7.1: Support and expand the Behavioral Health Workgroup		Community Engagement Collaborative Building Behavioral Health	4 new members	Provide targeted programming and outreach to connect residents with behavioral health services	Data Collection: Monthly, Annually  Data Source: Attendance list	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II Component C CHW Grant
Activity 7.2: Co-host community screening of and discussion around “Circles and Silence”		Community Engagement Behavioral Health Substance Use Youth Engagement	23 attendees		Data Collection: Time of Event  Data Source: Attendance List	Health Disparities Grant
Continue to work with community leaders and providers to address the stigma of accessing behavioral health services	Address the existing behavioral health services in a culturally appropriate and relevant way	Community Engagement Behavioral Health	Increase in behavioral health programming, services, and community discussions	Increased resident access to local behavioral health services  Decrease in substance-use related EMS calls	Data Collection: Annually  Data Source: Accountable Entity EMS Records Collaborative Membership Records	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II Component C CHW Grant

Partner with the East Providence Fire Department to develop and implement a food insecurity needs assessment	Address access to the Food Pantry and other support services by changing pathways to access	Community systems development and implementation  Barriers to Health Equity  Food Access	Implementation of food insecurity needs assessment by East Providence Fire Department	Implementation of food insecurity needs assessment by all East Providence municipal departments	Data Collection: Monthly Annually  Data Source: East Providence Fire Department East Providence Mayor's Office	Rhode to Equity Grant: \$77,900 Component C CHW Grant
<b>Goal 4: Support Health and Wellness</b>						
Continue to support the Teen Focus Workgroup; incentivize participation in the RIDOH Youth Engagement Community of Practice	Teen-focused outreach to encourage regular participation in and leadership of the Teen Focus Workgroup	Youth Engagement	Increase membership of Teen Focus workgroup	Cultivate teen leaders for both the workgroup and the community	Data Collection: Monthly Annually  Data Source: Membership List Community Activity Data (CODECT)	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant
Activity 10.1: Hosted two teen Meet-and-Greet events in partnership with FCCP, EPPC, and the East Providence Youth Center		Youth Engagement Collaborative Building	32 attendees at both events	Increased engagement with East Providence teens	Data Collection: Time of Event(s) Monthly Annually  Data Source: Attendance List HEZ engagement/activity tracking	Health Disparities Grant
Activity 10.2: Provide continuing education and internship opportunities to East Providence teens		Youth Engagement Community Resilience	Hosted 3 East Providence teen interns	Cultivate teen leaders for both the EPHEZ and the community  Increased engagement with East Providence teens	Data Collection: Monthly Annually  Data Source: Attendance List HEZ engagement/activity tracking	Health Disparities Grant

Participate in Year 2 of the Rhode to Equity Challenge	Promote the integration of clinical practice and community health strategies to address disparities in health outcomes for individuals with diabetes and other chronic illness, as well as those experiencing food insecurity	Food Access  Community Engagement  Education	Participation in Year 2 of the Rhode to Equity Challenge	Completion of identified community and systems level change goals	Data Collection: Monthly Annually  Data Source: HEZ engagement/activity tracking EBCAP Food Pantry client tracking East Providence school system records: free/reduced meal utilization	Rhode to Equity Grant: \$77,900 Component C CHW Grant
Continue to work with municipal leadership and community organizations to create and support youth recreation opportunities	Create/support free or low-cost recreational opportunities for East Providence teens	Youth Engagement Municipal Engagement	Co-host at least 2 recreational opportunities for East Providence teens	Increase access to free and/or low-cost recreational opportunities for East Providence teens	Data Collection: Annually  Data Source: HEZ engagement/activity tracking	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant
Continue to support the Senior Services Workgroup	Continue to build partnerships to address the following identified priority areas among East Providence seniors: -Hoarding -Social Isolation -Lack of CNAs	Community Engagement Social Isolation Senior Services	Increased membership  Support meetings on a bi-monthly basis	Increase resource access and awareness for East Providence seniors	Data Collection: Bi-Monthly Annually  Data Source: Attendance list HEZ engagement/activity tracking	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Component C CHW Grant Rhode to Equity Grant
Activity 13.1: Supported the creation and expansion of the Senior Health and Wellness Workgroup		Community Engagement Collaborative Building Senior Services	Hosted 5 meetings; average amount of attendees: 13	Identification of East Providence senior priority areas and resources	Data Collection: Monthly Annually  Data Source: Attendance list	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant

					HEZ engagement/activity tracking	
Activity 13.2: Hosted a workgroup presentation on hoarding, featuring speakers from across Rhode Island		Community Engagement Collaborative Building Senior Services	Attended by 43 individuals	N/A	Data Collection: Time of Event  Data Source: Attendance list	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant
Continue to partner with the East Providence Prevention Coalition to address social isolation; identify other community partners for future collaborations to address social isolation	Increase resident engagement and decrease social isolation; particular emphasis on the following demographics: -Seniors -Families with young children -Individuals with disabilities	Community Engagement Social Isolation Behavioral Health	Provide programming and support opportunities for EP residents to address social isolation	Increased resource engagement by East Providence residents  Municipal support and prioritization of social isolation as a health equity concern	Data Collection: Quarterly Annually  Data Source: Attendance list HEZ engagement/activity tracking Municipal funding and/or programming records	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II Component C CHW Grant
Continue to engage families with young children and expectant parents to participate in evidence-based maternal and early childhood programs	Provide support and connection for families; assist in securing social and health resources as needed	Community Engagement Maternal and Child Health Community Resilience Collaborative Building	Increased use of evidence-based maternal and early childhood programs	Improved childhood health outcomes	Data Collection: Monthly Annually  Data Source: Attendance list RIDOH MCH data	Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II

Activity 15.1: Partnered with Agnes B. Hennessey Elementary School to provide on-site Family Navigator services		Community Engagement Maternal and Child Health Community Resilience Collaborative Building	Connected with 21 families throughout the school year; placed hydroponic gardens in ten classrooms; expanded the school garden	Expansion to provide Family Navigator services throughout the East Providence school district (elementary)	Data Collection: Monthly Annually  Data Source: HEZ engagement/activity tracking	Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II
Activity 15.2: Offered two 18-week “Family Music Time with the Phil” classes in partnership with Parents as Teachers and the RI Philharmonic School		Community Engagement Maternal and Child Health Community Resilience Collaborative Building	10 families participated; see attached for pre- and post-survey results and feedback	Continued partnership with EBCAP Home Visiting and the RI Philharmonic School  Improved childhood health outcomes	Data Collection: Weekly (during programming) Annually  Data Source: Attendance list Pre- and post-surveys RIDOH MCH data	Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II
Activity 15.3: Offered 12-week “Incredible Years” programming		Community Engagement Maternal and Child Health Community Resilience	6 families participated; see attached for pre- and post-survey results and feedback	Continued provision of Incredible Years programming  Improved childhood health outcomes	Data Collection: Start/middle/end of programming Annually  Data Source: Attendance list Pre- and post-surveys RIDOH MCH data	Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II

Activity 15.4: Partnered with state and local organizations to offer educational and culturally relevant/sensitive programming		Community Engagement Maternal and Child Health Community Resilience Collaborative Building	Safe Sleep: 13 participants Weaver Library Dance Class: 13 participants Rite Smiles Dental Education: 10 participants	Continued provision of educational and/or evidence-based programming  Improved childhood health outcomes	Data Collection: Time of Event Annually  Data Source: Attendance list Pre- and post-surveys RIDOH MCH data	Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II
Expand partnership with the EBCAP Food Pantry and Community Health Team	Provide additional resources and support to community members in accessing fresh produce and lean proteins	Food Access Nutrition	Provide additional resources and support to community members in accessing fresh produce and lean proteins	Improve health outcomes for East Providence residents experiencing food insecurity  Increase access to and availability of fresh produce and lean proteins within East Providence for all residents	Data Collection: Monthly Annually  Data Source: GIS mapping HEZ engagement/activity database	Rhode to Equity Grant: \$77,900 Component C CHW Grant
Engage community members in health education programming; specific focus on nutrition and chronic pain/illness	Provide additional opportunities for health education for residents; improve health outcomes for residents experiencing food insecurity and/or chronic pain/illness	Food Access Nutrition Health Literacy Behavior Change	Provide at least 2 educational opportunities in the target areas	Improve health outcomes and nutritional literacy for East Providence residents	Data Collection: Monthly Annually  Data Source: Accountable Entity data RIDOH data Resident feedback and needs assessments; SDOH screenings	Rhode to Equity Grant: \$77,900 Component C CHW Grant

Goal 5: Strengthen Capacity/Structure of EP HEZ						
Continue to conduct outreach to key community partners and resident leaders	Increase stakeholder and resident engagement and impact	Community Engagement Collaborative Building	Increase EPHEZ Collaborative membership	Improved health outcomes for East Providence residents  Sustainable funding sources identified and utilized	Data Frequency: Monthly Annually  Data Source: HEZ engagement/activity database	Core Grant Health Disparities Grant Pre-School Development Grant, Component I and II  Component C CHW Grant
Activity 18.1: Developed a governance structure for the EPHEZ Steering Committee and Workgroups		Collaborative Building	See attached governance document	N/A	Data Frequency: Quarterly Annually  Data Source: EPHEZ governance document	Core Grant
Activity 18.2: Appointed Workgroup facilitators and defined Workgroup mission statement and goals		Collaborative Building	See attached governance document	N/A	Data Frequency: Quarterly Annually  Data Source: EPHEZ governance document EPHEZ Collaborative membership list	Core Grant
Activity 18.3: Encouraged EPHEZ Collaborative member participation in HEZ Learning Community Events		Collaborative Building	8 collaborative members attended HEZ Learning Communities	Improved Collaborative membership resource and health measure literacy	Data Frequency: Quarterly Annually  Data Source: Attendance list HEZ Collaborative member post-event feedback	Core Grant



## VII. Community Needs Assessment Summary (Updated)

<b>Information Source *</b> <i>Where/how are you getting the information (data)</i>	<b>Stakeholders engaged</b> <i>Who was/is the target population(s) and how were/are they identified and reached?</i>	<b>How will you/did you engage the different stakeholders?</b> <i>How does assessment support identification of needs coming from the community?</i>	<b>Findings/Results of the community assessment (if completed)</b> <i>What issues or priorities were identified in the community, and how will they be shared with the community and prioritized?</i>	<b>Success and challenges of this community needs assessment activity</b> <i>What would you do again and what would you have done differently?</i>
<p>Year 1 EP HEZ Needs Assessment (included review of existing research and census data as well as original research)</p>	<p>Steering Committee, HEZ Staff, East Providence residents, EBCAP employees who serve East Providence residents</p>	<p>Steering Committee Meetings, Work Group Meetings, Staff Meetings, surveys, social media, community meeting, key stakeholder interviews</p>	<p>We identified that the EP HEZ has many strengths: a strong existing sense of community, strong emergency services and a proximity to Providence and other locations. Areas most likely to be identified as needs, and least likely to be identified as strengths, were access to behavioral health services, housing/a good place to live, quiet and clean neighborhoods,</p>	<p>N/A</p>

			youth services, youth bullying, senior services, and transportation.	
HEZ Social Media Report - Hoot Suite	Steering Committee, HEZ Staff, community members	Steering Committee Meetings, Work Group Meetings, Staff Meetings, Facebook including Facebook Live events, Instagram	We can track community outreach and engagement and interest in activities	N/A
Rhode to Equity Participant Tracking and Internal Collaboration Tracking	Steering Committee, HEZ Staff	Steering Committee Meetings, Work Group Meetings, Staff Meetings	Tracked Retention of Participants: We have had the same core 17 community members participate throughout the year, and added 12 additional participants between December 2021- June 2022 Tracked Internal Collaboration of the Agency: The Food Pantry, HEZ, Health Center, and Community Health Team, collaborated to track responsiveness of Staff and Programming: The needs and suggestions of the program participants were listened to and incorporated	Using population health data for East Providence to direct what needs are addressed

Parents as Teachers Survey - Pre/Post and Attendance	Families with children ages 0-4. Steering Committee, HEZ Staff including Family Navigator, EBCAP family visiting and Head Start staff, RI Philharmonic & Music School	Steering Committee Meetings, Work Group Meetings, Staff Meetings	We track satisfaction, attendance, and demographic information.	COVID-19 encouraged regular attendance, as families did not have to worry about weather or transportation, and were eager to form new relationships and interact with other participants. A virtual learning environment also had the challenge of keeping children and parents engaged and encouraging participation.
Incredible Years	Families with young children	Incredible Years programming classes (12 classes of 1.5-2 hours/each)	We track satisfaction, attendance, and demographics	<p>-Social isolation and lack of connectedness as the result of COVID-19 resulted in families being more willing to connect with others in the program, providing a stronger peer support environment for families</p> <p>-A virtual environment made it difficult for participants to communicate privately or 1:1 with the facilitator</p>

Safe Sleep Surveys Pre/Post	Steering Committee, HEZ Staff	Steering Committee Meetings, Work Group Meetings, Staff Meetings	We track satisfaction, attendance	-Safe Sleep facilitators recognized that the existing curriculum did not successfully address the needs of the African-American community, and partnered with RIDOH to create a culturally relevant training, turning a challenge into a success
Resident Engagement Advisory Workgroup	Steering Committee, HEZ Staff, EP Residents, EBCAP employees serving EP community	Steering Committee Meetings, Work Group Meetings, Staff Meetings	Provide a space for residents to provide continuous feedback on successes, barriers, and concerns	-Able to build community trust by continuously providing a space to engage, and at a time when residents were able to attend -Difficult to encourage participation virtually, not a space for 1:1 conversations

## IX. Summary

The East Providence Health Equity Zone, like all Cohort 2 HEZs, was in an interesting state of development this year. Formed just prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EPHEZ Collaborative halted many of their initial infrastructure and coalition-building exercises in 2020, as they focused on addressing immediate community needs. Beginning Year 3 with a new Project Director, an ongoing pandemic, a budding relationship with the community, and uncertain about the impact COVID-19 would continue to have, EPHEZ spent the year strengthening the foundations and relationships that began in 2019. The relationship among Steering Committee members, and the incredible dedication that they continue to show cannot be described by words alone. From the constant sharing of resources and ideas, to brainstorming ways to address root causes of inequity and day-to-day struggles of residents alike, to asking if they can participate in weeknight and weekend events, the Steering

Committee has set the tone for the way that the EPHEZ Collaborative interacts with and supports residents. This same dedication is mirrored by the EPHEZ staff, who have tirelessly worked to improve outcomes and remove barriers for all of East Providence. They have each become community resources in their own right, as they connect residents to services, help them to fill out applications, distribute masks, sanitizer, and test kits, and remain approachable, friendly, and respectful to all. Despite the barriers we all continue to face after over two years of a global pandemic, the entire Collaborative has embodied the spirit of collaboration in support of East Providence residents.

The East Providence, Bristol, and Warren Health Equity Zone all share the backbone agency of East Bay Community Action Program, the support of which cannot be overstated. In addition to the regional strategies to address health disparities detailed earlier in this report, the access to social, medical, and behavioral health staff and services has been invaluable. New staff are able to immediately connect with subject matter experts across different departments, and programming opportunities are expanded due to the wealth of knowledge and partners at our fingertips. Our Health Disparities programming has been strengthened by our connection with the EBCAP Health Department, who joined us in monthly phone calls with RIDOH and the East Providence Emergency Management Agency to address COVID-19 vaccination, testing, and positivity rates for high-density communities. Our Rhode to Equity team has been supported by both the EBCAP Community Health Team and Food Pantry, who have helped to create needs assessments, supported the Produce to People program, and connected us with residents. Our Pre-School Development Grant continues to build relationships with the EBCAP Home Visiting Team and Head Start/Early Head Start departments, who supported play-and-learn groups, outreach activities, and staff on-boarding.

This is not to imply that the year has been without challenges. One of the primary barriers to community engagement continues to be COVID-19, and the necessary health and safety precautions implemented across Rhode Island. Although the EPHEZ Steering Committee continues to meet on a regular and frequent basis, encouraging community participation was at times a challenge. With rising COVID-19 cases and concerns around first the Delta and then the Omicron variants over the first six months of the grant cycle, residents' willingness to participate in in-person programming varied. Although the East Providence HEZ continued to build trust within the community due to continuous outreach efforts, partnerships with municipal leadership, and the provision of supplies and resources, the unfortunate reality is that many residents continue to experience virtual meeting fatigue, are concerned about the health of themselves and their loved ones, and are struggling with the effects of isolation. EPHEZ encouraged participation by continuing to incentivize attendance, and by regularly communicating with residents about programming that would be impactful and well-received. EPHEZ remained dedicated to continuing to meet the community where they are, both physically and mentally, and the continued guidance and support from RIDOH around virtual engagement, safe in-person engagement, and distribution of PPE and at-home test kits over the course of the year, particularly that of our Project Officer, has been invaluable.

At the end of Year 2, EPHEZ determined a focus on resident engagement, policy and systems change, and improved access to social and health resources for Year 3. Additionally, a primary focus was the solidification of the governance model, completed at the end of 2021.

Evaluation continues to be a focus for EPHEZ. Despite distributing an RFP for an evaluator, we did not receive any proposals. In partnership with the Warren and Bristol Health Equity Zones, we are re-visiting the role of the evaluator at the regional level, and discussing embedding the

evaluator fully within EBCAP. As we work through this process, we are also summarizing the community feedback gathered from our community event series in the Spring of 2022. Recognizing the changed landscape from the initial Community Needs Assessment in 2019, EPHEZ focused the second half of the grant cycle on providing opportunities for residents to provide feedback, identify priorities in target areas such as housing, food access, behavioral health supports, and civic engagement, and to connect with resource providers. The events were incredible successful, attended by over 500 residents, and will help to inform the work of EPHEZ as we head into Year 4.

As EPHEZ continues to grow, additional resources for administrative functions, such as financial tracking, reporting, and general program coordination would be beneficial. Looking towards sustainability, RIDOH support in seeking new funding sources over the next year is also needed.